

# THE



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# BULLETIN

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Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website - [poa4us.org](http://poa4us.org)

## District Manager Janet Tutt Updates POA Membership

District Manager, Janet Tutt, shared news from District government with POA members at the July membership meeting. Ms. Tutt is hired by the Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD), and she and all District staff are employees of the VCCDD. There are intergovernmental agreements with the other districts, including all the numbered residential districts, to provide staff and services. This allows for a cost efficiency for all districts, rather than each hiring staff and entering into contracts for services that are provided throughout The Villages.

District staff do not set policy; that is the job of the elected officials. While she and other staff provide opinions and guidance, once a decision is made, it is up to staff to implement the policy.

There are more than 1,000 District employees; the majority are part-time and residents of The Villages.

**Amenities Purchase.** In November 2016, the Sumter Landing Community Development District (SLCDD) purchased the remaining residential amenities between CR466 and CR44 from the Developer. Ms. Tutt said residents have seen no difference in the quality or level of services provided because the District managed contracts to provide those services before the purchase. The District now receives all amenity fees paid by the residents, providing full transparency and a seamless provision of services.

In the purchase agreement, the SLCDD and the Developer agreed that amenity policies and budgets would be handled by the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC), which is

a committee of resident elected officials from Districts 5-10. (Remember, though, that they are appointed to PWAC by their respective Boards for PWAC, and the SLCDD makes the final decision.) PWAC met on July 17 for an intense review of all departments and services that are paid for with amenity fees, and they will meet again August 28 for a budget workshop (see article page 18).

**Growth South of CR44.** While there are many resident questions about growth south of CR44, Ms. Tutt can't tell us much, because she doesn't know what the plans are unless or until the Developer comes to the District to expand the boundaries of an existing district or creates a new one. The process is that the Developer first goes to the governing municipality (for the area south of CR44 that is the City of Wildwood), and then to the District.

Ms. Tutt's advice is to watch the agendas from District 12 to see everything that is going on in the Fenney area.

**District and Architectural Review Committee Openings.** The District 7 Board of Supervisors has an opening for a Board member who resigned, whose term expires in 2018. The deadline to apply is August 15. The Board will then interview and select a replacement.

The Architectural Review Committee, which meets weekly, has openings for a member from District 10 and an alternate from District 3.

Applications and announcements for openings on various boards and committees can be found on the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org).

(Continued on page 2)

## Community Standards

### What Are They and Why Do We Have Them?

The mission of the Community Standards Department is to assist residents in upholding the aesthetic value of their property in The Villages. Administrative Operations Manager for the District, Diane Tucker, and Candice Dennis, Manager of the Community Standards Department, spoke to residents at the POA's June membership meeting to offer assistance and guidance in navigating the sometimes confusing waters of the Deed Restrictions and Architectural Review processes.

Each residential District adopted guidelines to identify, clarify and interpret the adopted "Rule" to Enforce Deed Compliance relating to

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**Tuesday, August 15, 2017**  
**POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
Third TUESDAY of the Month - 7PM  
**LAUREL MANOR RECREATION CENTER**

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## District Manager

(Continued from page 1)

### New and Exciting!

- The Enrichment Academy (TEA), the replacement program for the defunct Lifelong Learning College (LLC), is rolling out the curriculum for its first term, which begins in October, at an information expo on August 3, from 8-11AM, at the Lake Sumter Landing Square. This is an opportunity to meet the instructors and get information about all the courses that will be offered. Ms. Tutt said this is just the beginning, and she expects TEA to get bigger and better. She also said that there will not be any negative impacts on usage of rooms in the recreation centers since they are using rooms that were previously assigned to LLC.
- Saddlebrook Recreation Center has undergone an extensive renovation and expansion, with the grand opening set for July 28.
- Fenney and Blue Heron Recreation Centers are open and are different than anything that existed. Ms. Tutt commented that she has heard home sales are moving quickly in that area.
- The Recreation Department is now known as the "Recreation and Parks Department", which embraces the importance of passive parks that are now used extensively in areas North of CR466 under the purview of the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC).

**Water.** Ms. Tutt learned that officials at the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) have informally indicated that it is more likely than not that the Phase III Water

**The POA Bulletin** is published monthly by the Property Owners' Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the POA postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to ensure that facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources.

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Conservation order will not be lifted on August 1. Their engineers' models indicate that, even though our area has received significant rain-fall since June 5, it does not appear to be enough to make up for the shortfall created during the drought. This is not a formal and final decision so watch the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) for updates.

**Villages Public Safety (VPS) and Community Watch.** Jeremiah Wolfe is now heading the Community Watch Division of Villages Public Safety. Chief Wolfe, who was previously a Lieutenant with the Sumter County Sheriff's department, has learned just how extensive the work of Community Watch is. (NOTE: Chief Wolfe will be the speaker at the September POA Membership Meeting.) VPS responds to more than 21,000 calls each year, and is now housed in the Sumter County Safety building near CR44. Ms. Tutt said that 2-3 new fire stations will be built on the growing south side.

Ms. Tutt also commented on the on-going negotiations with the firefighter's local union. She noted that in any negotiation there is a lot of discussion, the two sides never start together, and there are two sides to every story. She is excited about the package the District is offering, but cautioned that it will lead to a substantial increase in the Sumter County fire assessment. The assessment, under consideration now, is to increase from \$81 to \$124 per year. Most of the increase will go to salaries.

Disagreements in the negotiations have stemmed from the number of personnel assigned per unit. Ms. Tutt stated that the District has always planned to have three people per unit. The difference between the two parties is that the District believes it should be a management right to determine staffing and the union wants it written into the contract.

Ms. Tutt also stated emphatically that the department is fully staffed and safety in The

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## POA

### Mission Statement

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages is an independent organization devoted to our home ownership experience.

The Vision/Objective of the POA is to make The Villages an even better place in which to live, where Residents' Rights are respected, and local governments are responsive to the needs and interests of residents.

The POA serves Villagers through programs of education, research, analysis, representation, advocacy, and legislative action.

The POA also functions as a "watchdog" organization overseeing the actions of our Developer and our local governments.

Specific POA attention is focused on housing, community, neighborhood, and local government issues. Special emphasis is focused on the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC), our Community Development Districts (CDDs), the Florida Chapter 190 law that regulates CDD operations, and our Developer.

The POA has no ties or obligations to the Developer of The Villages which might compromise the POA position or its advocacy of Residents' Rights.

The POA, founded in 1975, is the original homeowners' organization in The Villages. Membership is open to all Villages residents. □

## The Villages Residents' Bill of Rights

### RESIDENTS have RIGHTS to:

1. Be treated in a respectful, fair, and responsive manner by the Developer and our local government officials.
2. Have decision making authority for important issues in our community.
3. Elect our top government officials and approve appointments of the top administrative officials in our community.
4. Approve major purchases of common property and the related debt obligations assumed by residents.
5. Have local governments that are free of any conflict of interest issues.
6. Be charged honest monthly amenity fees that are used only for the stated purposes.
7. Receive full disclosure when purchasing a home here in The Villages.
8. Receive an objective market appraisal for major purchases of common property.
9. Receive objective, unbiased, unslanted news reporting from local news sources.
10. Be informed beforehand by the Developer on any major change in our community. □



*Pam Powell*

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## Cracked Lanai Ceiling Update

The POA has hired two structural engineers from outside of The Villages to inspect examples of the reported cracked lanai ceilings. They will each provide an independent report that will give the POA information with which to determine a next step. We'll keep you posted. □

## Water Conservation Phase III Order

As everyone in The Villages knows, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) issued a Phase III Conservation order, effective June 5. The impact on Villagers was a reduction of watering to one day per week, and a 10% surcharge on all water used. The order is in effect until August 1, and it will be up to SWFWMD to lift the order.

District Manager Janet Tutt said at the POA Membership Meeting that the District was informally told that it is unlikely the order will be lifted on August 1 because the SWFWMD engineers' models indicate that, even though the area has gotten a lot of rain, it does not appear to be enough to make up for the shortfall that occurred during the drought.

This information is NOT final and residents should check the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) for updates. □

## Thanks For Your Input

Our email survey on "How would you increase POA membership?" was a GREAT success.

Thanks to all the members who participated. Your input is important to us, and we will be asking again for your opinions. Thank You! □

## DID YOU KNOW?

Community Watch used at the town squares and special events are NOT paid for with resident amenity fees. At town squares, they are paid by the Developer from special assessments (taxes) to the commercial properties. The sponsoring organization conducting any special event pays for any Community Watch services used. □

## WHAT CAN THE POA DO FOR YOU?

Founded in 1975, the Property Owners' Association (POA) of The Villages is an independent organization run by resident volunteers elected by the membership. The POA is dedicated to making a great place to live even better by insuring that Residents' Rights are respected and local government is responsive to our needs and interests.

For more than 40 years, the POA has been involved in many issues that have affected residents. The following are just a few; more can be found on the POA's website [poa4us.org](http://poa4us.org).

- Spearheaded the inspection of over 1,500 homes and prodded the home warranty department and various contractors to repair sloppy work and installation of vinyl siding on homes built south of CR466 between 2005-2008.

- Filed a class-action lawsuit against the Developer and the Villages Center Community Development District, alleging a decline in services and facility maintenance north of CR466 that resulted in a \$40 Million settlement. The Amenity Authority Committee, with members elected BY the residents, was created to control the settlement funds and all non-bond related amenity fees.
- Opposed and defeated a proposed Sumter County Hospital Tax, which would have cost residents \$200-\$300 annually.

Numbers Matter. The larger our membership numbers, the easier it is to argue that the majority of Village residents support our advocacy effort. The larger our number, the greater our impact.

So, Help Us Help You – Join the POA Today! □

### POA 2017 AND BEYOND MEMBERSHIP & CONTRIBUTION FORM

Please complete each section and return to: The POA, P.O. Box 386, Oxford, FL 34484

**PLEASE PRINT!** or Use the **ONLINE FORM** found online at [poa4us.org](http://poa4us.org)

☐ New Member    ☐ Renewal    Number of People in Household: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S)(1) \_\_\_\_\_  
(SAME LAST NAME)

NAME(S)(2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(DIFFERENT LAST NAME)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

VILLAGE \_\_\_\_\_ VILLAGES ID# \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

(We respect your privacy. Your email address is for POA Official use ONLY)

#### MEMBERSHIP

**DUES** (Please Select One):

- ☐ One year - 2017 - \$10 per/household  
☐ Two years - 2017/2018 - \$20 per/household  
☐ Three years - 2017/2018/2019 - \$30 per/household

**ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION IF DESIRED:** Please accept my additional contribution to the POA in the following amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT FOR DUES AND ANY CONTRIBUTIONS:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Enclosed is a Stamped, Self-Addressed Envelope, along with this form and my check. Please mail my Membership Card to me.    ☐ Please hold my POA Membership Card for me to pick up at one of the monthly POA Meetings.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE POA**



## District Manager

(Continued from page 2)

Villages is not in peril. She said they are putting the greatest amount of money into paramedic/firefighter positions because they most directly impact the health, safety and welfare of the residents.

**District's Website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org).** Ms. Tutt urged residents to use the District's website for information and to either attend Welcome Wednesday or sign up online to receive the Welcome Wednesday newsletter that comes out every week. Updates are given from every department with information about paths, golf courses, projects, etc., and rumors are addressed in this meeting. Ms. Tutt suggested that if you've heard a rumor, come to the meeting, or call or email the District customer service department, so that it can be addressed.

**Editor's Note:** *The POA wishes to thank Ms. Tutt for attending the meeting, providing valuable information, and addressing audience questions. While, as Ms. Tutt stated at the meeting, we may not always agree on issues, we always agree to be fair and open in our communication about issues affecting*

*the residents in The Villages.*

### Audience Questions and Answers

**Q.** Was the Buffalo Glen Softball Field excluded from the amenity purchase? **A.** Yes, it was excluded and no amenity fees have ever been used to maintain or improve it. That is the Developer's expense.

**Q.** Does the Charter School own that softball field and plan to use it for their own expansion? What will happen to the residents who use that facility? **A.** Ms. Tutt said she is not aware of who owns the property; it could be the Villages of Lake Sumter (the Developer) or any one of several other property groups. She assured residents that if it were to go away, there would be a replacement; the Developer understands the impact of softball in The Villages.

**Q.** Regarding E-billing why is there a charge for making an online payment? **A.** This is a convenience fee that must be charged. According to Florida law, costs of payment processing cannot be passed on to residents.

**Q.** There seems to be a drastic increase in the crime rate and the number of under 55 aged people living in The Villages. **A.** The District

cannot enforce internal deed restrictions: It is the Developer's responsibility. She said there has probably been an increase in the number of homes that have been left to children and grandchildren, which may affect the ages of people living in them. And while the perception may be that crime has increased dramatically, Ms. Tutt has looked at crime reports for the past 12 years as District Manager, and she has not seen a spike. She believes that since crimes are reported online with pictures more than they used to be, it has created a perception of increase, but it is not to the extent you might think.

**Q.** There are increasing issues with safety and driving because of obstructed and/or decaying street signs that people can't see. This results in sudden stops and sharp turns which are dangerous. **A.** Ms. Tutt agrees 100%. The good news, she said, is that Sumter County is changing out all of the street signs. The bad news is that they are going district by district as money is available, and the cost is substantial, so it will take time to get them all done. District 4, which owns its roads, has decided not to wait and will replace signs as road projects are being done. She advised that if a sign has become obstructed or unreadable, residents should call Sumter County and they will resolve the issue.

**Q.** How are special needs being handled by TEA? **A.** As a part of the sign up for a course, the

(Continued on page 5)



## LEARN & GROW EXPO

The Enrichment Academy is excited to announce the kickoff of their new curriculum!

**Thursday, August 3 | 8am – 11am**

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Registration start dates **August 7th** for residents and **August 21st** for non-residents.

\*Early registration is available ONLY TO RESIDENTS with valid resident ID.

Visit the Expo Registration tent from 8:30-11am to register. In the event of inclement weather, the Expo will be held at Lake Miona Recreation Center.

### GET IN TOUCH

(352) 674-1800 | [www.DistrictGov.org](http://www.DistrictGov.org)

[TheEnrichmentAcademy@DistrictGov.org](mailto:TheEnrichmentAcademy@DistrictGov.org) | 984 Old Mill Run | The Villages, FL 32162

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## District Manager

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student can complete the special needs section so they can be accommodated. The only caveat is that a person can't simply show up at a class and expect to have a special need accommodated.

**Q.** Who picks up branches and debris in the roads? **A.** The roads, except villa roads and all roads in District 4, are owned by the County, so technically they are responsible. However, if Community Watch and many of the District's contractors see something in the road, they will stop to pick it up if it is creating a hazard. If you see something you can call Customer Service or Community Watch.

**Q.** If TEA classes are not filled by residents, there is an upcharge for non-residents to attend. Why can't this policy also apply to the golf courses and sports pools? **A.** Our golf courses get so much play that in slower seasons it helps the condition of the course to allow them to be played less. Pools are paid for with resident amenity fees and the integrity of that amenity is a key consideration. We are not charging TEA a rental fee for rooms since most participants will be residents who already pay for that amenity. But we can charge a higher fee to non-residents who are not paying amenity fees.

**Q.** Has there been a resolution to the property by the Rio Grande postal station? **A.** There

have been too many challenges with the non-developer owned properties in that area so the AAC has directed District staff and counsel to stop efforts on those. The First Baptist Church at CR42 has put the Fellowship Hall and 10 acres back on the table for consideration, so the AAC is exploring that opportunity. □

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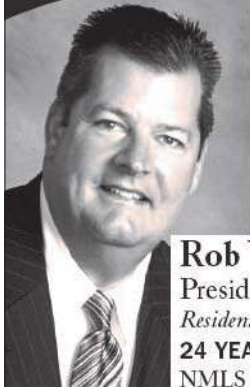
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## Community Standards

(Continued from page 1)

the exterior appearance or use of real property within its boundaries. These are the guidelines used by the Community Standards Department in responding to complaints, and are also used by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) when considering applications. It is also a bit easier to read than the actual Deed Restriction document and provides a matrix to help residents determine if they are impacted by a particular rule.

The Adopted Rule and Architectural Review Manual for each residential district can be found on the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org); select "Departments" and "Community Standards."

**Architectural Review.** The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is comprised of eleven volunteer residents, one from each residential district

and Lady Lake/Lake County. The ARC meets weekly for 3-4 hours and typically reviews approximately 100 applications every week.

Committee members do not see the applications prior to the meeting. The Committee's function is administrative only, and, after review, either approves or disapproves a modification request. Any modification to the exterior of the home, whether it is expanding the driveway, painting, putting in a pool, removing a tree, etc., should be reviewed and approved by the ARC prior to beginning any work. Appropriate work permits must be obtained by the associated county or municipal government. Ms. Dennis said that Sumter County verifies that the project has received ARC approval prior to issuing permits.

Applications and instructions are available on the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org). Click on "Departments" on the top menu and select "Community Standards." From the left column menu select "Architectural Review." Ms. Dennis advised that the application must be submitted by the homeowner, and should include the site plan or boundary survey of the property and building plans if available.

**Deed Compliance.** Every homeowner signs a legal contract, known as the "Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions", upon closing on the purchase of their home, through which they agree to certain standards of maintenance and aesthetic guidelines for their property. These restrictions are a primary reason people move to The Villages, because they establish a level of quality that must be maintained and help to provide a reasonable assurance that property values will not decline because of poorly main-

tained properties.

Because there is a great deal of diversity in each Declaration document, Ms. Dennis advises each homeowner to become familiar with their particular set. Your Declaration document can be downloaded from [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org). Click on "Departments" on the top menu and select "Community Standards." On the left column menu, click on "Download Your Declaration of Restrictions" and follow the instructions. If you need assistance, you can call the Community Standards office at 352-751-3912.

Ms. Dennis stressed that a main component of their department's work and purpose is education. Many complaints are received due to improvements that were made without going through the Architectural Review process. Staff in the department are always available by phone or by visiting the District office in Lake Sumter Landing to assist residents, answer questions, and help them to follow the proper procedures before making a modification, and to help them come into compliance if found in violation.

Enforcement is handled on a "complaint" basis. This means that unless a complaint is received about a yard ornament, a sign, landscaping, etc., the District is not going to police all of the properties in The Villages. However, if a complaint is received, the Deed Compliance officers must address it, and you may receive the dreaded "knock on the door."

Ms. Dennis said the approach is always to help the homeowner and to avoid writing violations. From June 1, 2016 - May 31, 2017, 5,148 complaints were received, only 866 violations were written, and 9 public hearings were held.

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## Community Standards

(Continued from page 6)

The Community Standards office is administrative only, with enforcement authority executed by the individual numbered districts. If a violation is written, the enforcement process begins, giving the homeowner a specified period of time to bring the property into compliance. The process may end with a public hearing before the District Board of Supervisors in which the property is located. That district Board will make the final determination on the violation and may impose fines and legal proceeding as allowed in the rules.

The Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions cover external and internal restrictions; however, the Community Standards Department only addresses issues external to the home. Examples of internal restrictions may include things such as the number of pets or age of residents living in the home.

If a complaint needs to be made regarding an internal restriction, that is handled through the Developer's representative. The Community Standards office will help you make that complaint, but does not get involved in resolving the issue. In addition, external issues in residential Districts 11-12 are also currently handled by the Developer's representative.

Following is a summary of many items covered in the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions located on the Community Standards page on the District's Website, [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org). This summary is meant to call attention to some of the major items and is by no means a comprehensive list.

- **Air Conditioners:** Window air conditioners are prohibited and only central air conditioners are permitted.
- **Building Repair:** Dwellings and structures must at all times be kept in good repair, adequately painted and otherwise clean.
- **Garbage/Trash:** Prior to being placed curbside for collection, no rubbish, trash, garbage or other waste material shall be kept or permitted on any Homesite or on dedicated or reserved areas except in containers, as required by your sanitation hauler, located in appropriate areas concealed from public view.
- **Lawn ornaments:** Some neighborhoods prohibit lawn ornaments. Please check your individual Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions.

- **Maintenance:** Landscaping shall be maintained to provide a neat and clean appearance. Removal of weeds, dead plants, grass clippings, trash and debris is required to meet this objective.
- **Modifications:** Alterations to the exterior of the home or lot require architectural approval.
- **Motor Vehicles:** No vehicles incapable of operation shall be stored on any Homesite.
- **Residential Use Restrictions:** Property must be devoted only to single-family residential use. Properties within the Subdivision are intended for residential use and no commercial, professional or similar activity requiring either maintaining an inventory, equipment or customer/client visits may be conducted in a Home or on a Homesite.
- **Satellite Dishes:** Please contact the Community Standards Department for guidelines.
- **Signage:** Where permitted, please check your individual Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions for size and location.
- **Tree Removal:** No tree with a trunk four (4) inches in diameter shall be removed or effectively removed through excessive injury without first obtaining written permission.

### Questions and Responses

**Q.** Should a permit be displayed to show a homeowner has gone through the ARC process? **A.** Usually not, because signs are not permitted in most districts. You can always call the Community Standards Department (352-751-3912) to inquire whether a project has been approved.

**Q.** Can an ARC decision be changed on appeal? **A.** The only reason for an appeal to the District Board of Supervisors would be for due process or that rules were applied incorrectly.

**Q.** What kind of portable air conditioning units can be used? **A.** Window air conditioners cannot be used. A "mini-split" unit can be used on lanais.

**Q.** Does it help to submit pictures with the ARC application? **A.** Yes, pictures always help the committee.

**Q.** My deed restrictions state "no aerials or satellite dishes", as prohibited by law. **A.** We (the District) cannot restrict if allowed by law.

**Q.** How can the ARC approve a second story addition to a home? **A.** Nothing in the deed res-

trictions prohibits a second story, although it may be denied a couple of times before approved. Residents are not "buying a view," so that is not a reason for denial. □

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## Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) Meeting Summary June 7, 2017

### Audience Comments

- Resident suggested there is not a defined protocol for who has the right-of-way on Multi-Modal Paths and asked the AAC to consider establishing one to improve safety. It is outside the purview of the AAC and District Manager, Janet Tutt, said that the District will not provide such protocol or direction because of liability issues. It is the same situation with roundabouts. The Recreation Department put out the SHARE the road brochure that describes a common-sense approach to using roadways and paths in The Villages.

### Old Business

- Property for Additional Recreation Facilities.** At the last meeting, the AAC had directed staff to reach out to the non-developer property owners in the Rio Grande area. Legal counsel sent letters and, so far, has received one response. They have no other concrete information and will sort through responses as they come in.

In the meantime, Ms. Tutt was contacted by the First Baptist Church on CR42 for further discussion about the purchase of the Fellowship Hall and 10 acres of property. Nearly 2 years ago, two appraisals came in at approximately \$1.2 million, which the church decided was too low, subsequently withdrawing its offer to sell. Ms. Tutt observed that there have been tremendous changes in that area with the new Phillips and Soulliere Villas as well as increased commercial development. Church administrators have now come back and offered to sell the Fellowship Hall and 10 acres for \$1.5 million.

Ms. Tutt reminded AAC members that they have been looking at other property options with little success. Efforts to secure the non-developer owned properties at Rio Grande have taken time and additional attorney fees, with no results. The 40 acres on CR42 has no infrastructure or access, and the cost to develop is prohibitive.

It is staff's recommendation that the AAC

seriously consider the church property. It has golf cart accessibility, but they would need to include the access road from CR42, which Ms. Tutt believes would not be a problem.

Ms. Tutt also stated that she has recently reconfirmed with the Villages of Lake Sumter (VLS – the Developer) that they will build the pool they previously offered when the church property was under consideration. There are, however, timing issues. The property would need to be acquired sooner rather than later in order to accommodate the Developer's construction schedule for Soulliere Villas. However, the church won't begin work on its new Fellowship Hall until later this summer or early fall. So, if the District purchases the property, it will need to allow the church to continue to use its building until the new one is ready.

Consensus of the AAC members was that the church proposal be back on the August agenda for consideration with a timeline, data, engineering and other information that can help bring the AAC closer to a decision. Ms. Tutt also cautioned that while there have been suggestions about what recreation and programming might be offered, if the decision is made to move ahead, District Recreation and Parks Director, John Rohan, would undergo the normal practice of gathering resident input and develop a plan for presentation before anything is finalized. (See related article on page 10).

There was also consensus that any replies received from Rio Grande property owners will be reviewed, but that no additional staff and legal time or money will be spent pursuing those options. If any properties are identified that may help "square off" the Rio Grande property, they will bring it to AAC for consideration.

- Church of Faith Property Sale.** On the historical side, District Counsel is obtaining signatures on an agreement to sell a small parcel to the church.
- Springdale Trail Renovation.** The question is whether to move it to Multi-Modal Path category, and if so, will District 4 assume maintenance responsibility for it. District 4 already indicated in its letter to the AAC that it will. Staff will come back to the next meeting with pricing for resurfacing

(Continued on page 9)



## AAC Meeting

(Continued from page 8)

and widening, and the AAC can determine if it will approve the request and at what level of improvement based on costs.

- **Decorative Water Features.** Chairman Carl Bell asked District Property Manager Sam Wartinbee for an inventory of what fountains are where, what lighting is used, etc. This will be an August agenda item.

### Capital Projects Update

- **Hacienda Trail Improvements.** Phase I has begun and residents are reminded this is a construction zone and they should stay out of the area. There will be associated renovation costs for the championship course because the improvements will impact the course, but those will be paid by the Developer.
- **Saddlebrook.** Project is complete and grand opening set for July 28.
- **Springdale Exercise Equipment.** Cannot be placed under power lines so John Rohan suggested it would be a good feature to move to Mulberry Recreation. Consensus is to move forward.

### Information Items

- The AAC embraced the suggestion that the word 'Parks' be added to the Recreation Department. Chairman Bell noted that adding the word gives additional visibility to who we are and that we have facilities and parks.

The next meeting of the Amenity Authority Committee is August 9, at 9AM, at Savannah Center. Meeting agenda and minutes can be found on the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org). Click on "Amenity Authority Committee" on the left side menu, then click to the far right on the desired meeting for agendas and minutes. □

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## First Baptist Church Offers Building And 10 Acres To District

As reported in the AAC Meeting Highlights article on page 8, the First Baptist Church on CR42 has once again approached the District regarding a potential purchase of its Fellowship Hall and 10 acres of property.

In 2015, the Church came to the District with the same offer. After two appraisals came in at approximately \$1.2 Million, church officials pulled out of the deal because the appraisals were deemed too low. Now they are asking \$1.5 Million for the same building and property.

This is a positive development, but more information is needed, and should be provided before the AAC decides to move forward.

First, this is an increase in asking price of \$300,000, which is not an insignificant amount.

Shouldn't the appraisal be updated to con-

firm that this is fair market value? If there has, in fact, been a lot of positive development in the area, a new appraisal should reflect increased value for the church property as well.

In the previous purchase agreement presented in December 2015, the purchase price was to be based on two appraisals. If the lesser of the two values was not greater than 5% less than the higher appraised value, then the purchase price would be the lower of the two. If it is greater than 5% but less than 10% the price would be the average of the two. If the difference is greater than the 10%, then the two parties would meet in an attempt to determine the purchase price. Either party could withdraw from the contract within 30 days after both appraisals were received, which the Church chose to exercise.

This is an established process for governments when making a purchase of this size. In fact, when the AAC was discussing the purchase of the 40 acres on CR42, District Manager Janet Tutt advised the committee that, as a governmental entity, the District does not have the ability to negotiate a sales price as an individual can do when purchasing property.

The Purchaser, in this case the District, would have 180 days to determine whether the property was suitable. Ms. Tutt advised at that time that staff would address the usefulness and modifications needed for the current structure to be used as a recreation facility.

These are steps that need to be followed now too. The building has had another eighteen months of wear and tear and the District would not take possession for another year. Mechanical replacements can be costly and should be figured into the appraisal and/or final purchase price.

District Manager Tutt told the AAC that the Developer is still willing to construct the pool on the property, which is also great news. Timing is an issue as construction on the Souliere Villas is scheduled to begin very soon and there are infrastructure issues that will come into play to get the pool built.

The AAC has spent years looking for a viable property for additional recreation facilities north of CR466. This was one of the first that came to the table and was very desirable at the time. It still is. However, residents deserve to know that the AAC has made a sound financial

(Continued on page 11)

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## First Baptist Church

(Continued from page 10)

decision. If the appraisal comes back 10% lower than \$1.5 Million (less than \$1.35 Million), the AAC will have to decide how to proceed if they cannot negotiate a price. Knowing what high ticket replacement costs might be in the future is also informed planning.

We know the clock is ticking and this opportunity came swiftly and unexpectedly. That should not preclude dotting all the 'I's and crossing the 'T's in the due diligence process. That is the standard of transparency that the District has set. □

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## Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) Meeting Highlights July 10, 2017

The Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) welcomed the new appointee from District 11, Patty Hoxie.

### Audience Comments

- A resident raised a safety concern on the commercial access road that runs behind Fresh Market on CR466 to Walmart. There are currently 3-way stops in 3 locations and he questioned whether a 4-way stop would be safer. Staff will take that concern to the appropriate commercial property group who is responsible for that roadway.

### Old Business

- Bridgeport Entry Gate.** Richard Bush of Kimley-Horn Associates (KHA) presented findings from the study conducted at the gate in June and provided a Technical Memorandum dated July 5. He noted another Technical Memorandum was done in May regarding speed bumps.

PWAC members and residents discussed line of site issues and the observation that most golf carts are slowed down by speed bumps before crossing the roadway, but do not usually stop. Speed bumps are an issue to be decided by the individual residential district, while the gates and signage are now a matter for PWAC under their additional amenity oversight.

KHA recommendations:

"In general, we conclude that the restricted sight lines for the various vehicular and cart movements create uncertainty for the users of this crossing. If the sight lines were clear all drivers would be better able to judge when it was safe to make their crossing movement. Though the carts are instructed that they are to yield to vehicular traffic, they cannot clearly see those vehicles from the stop signs on the MUT. Based on our field observations, we offer the following recommendations for improved traffic operations at the MUT crossing.

"1. Modify the "Resident Entry" sign to allow visibility for westbound golf carts and southbound exiting vehicles to see each other. Remove / replant any landscaping in this sight line.

"2. Modify the entering gate activation push button housing to allow visibility for

southbound entering vehicles to see eastbound travelling golf carts.

"3. Adjust the timing on the southbound existing gate arm to require a single exiting vehicle to make a full stop before the gate opens. Currently, a car approaching this gate can continue through the gate arm without stopping if they slow down.

"4. Modify the median refuge area to improve the two-stage golf cart crossing. Replace and clearly post the stop signs in the median. On the date of our field visit one was missing and the one that was present was obstructed by landscaping.

"5. Address the speed bumps on the MUT, as described below.

"Speed bumps were installed by the VCDD6 in 2007 in an attempt to get carts to stop at the stop signs on the path. Indeed, much of the operation of the intersection would be greatly improved if cart drivers obeyed the posted regulatory signage. Though speed bumps are not recommended by Kimley-Horn at this location and there is widespread consensus in the transportation industry that speed bumps are inappropriate for bicyclists and pedestrians, the decision of whether or not to keep them can be at the discretion of the VCDD6. Kimley-Horn observed that the presence of speed bumps at this location may actually be inducing cart drivers to slow to a roll to navigate the speed bumps instead of coming to a full stop at the stop signs. We observe the following regarding speed bumps at this location:

"1. The speed bumps appear to encourage

(Continued on page 16)

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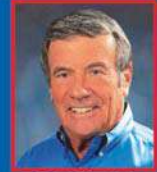
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217-3179



Tom Heller  
874-2167



Bob Slutsky  
572-0551



Bonnie Manross 446-0107  
Jean Kreiger 425-0865



Joy Wilson  
552-5337



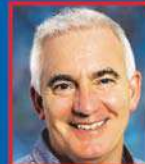
Don Maycott  
770-312-2982



Lee Gettling  
445-4875



Frank Gray  
427-7416



Bob Payne 748-0455  
or 315-694-0925



Buddy Clark  
504-8145



Debbie Roberts  
513-470-3787



Susie Ellis  
661-9440



Brad Salmons  
614-736-2723



Faye Shelkofsky  
561-818-6280



Tammy Freilich  
414-8473



Dr. Wendy Sudberg  
973-2007



Mary Larkin  
406-5359



Cindy Steinemann  
266-5836



Diane Siefkas  
598-7391



Jay Tatman  
210-7600



Kim Aschman  
630-270-7584



Jennifer Keane  
661-0258



Mary Colbert  
207-8278



Keith Caulk  
431-8539



Guy Shipley  
321-356-3755



Lynn Bartlett  
817-4023



Cheryl Simmons  
404-272-6113



Paul Jackson  
859-322-1953



Ginger Hurley  
270-217-3978



Cory Freilich  
770-500-9943



Luis "Tap" Tapanes  
322-0627

## PWAC Highlights

(Continued from page 14)

"rolling stops" at these locations.

"2. The speed bumps are the full width of the trail, which means that a cart that has just crossed the entrance must then also slow down for another speed bump on the other side. We observed regular backups because of this issue.

"3. In the westbound direction, the location of the speed bump is such that the golf carts must actually straddle the bump to obey the posted stop sign.

"4. Speed bumps are not appropriate for bicyclists or pedestrians. If the District keeps the speed bumps, they should be relocated further from the intersection to allow for a golf cart to stop at the stop sign without having to straddle the speed bump. The speed bump should also be limited to the approaching lane only and removed from the receiving lane so as not to cause slowing of the golf carts within the vehicular travel lane. If the speed bumps are removed, we recommend that a painted stop bar and "STOP" message be added to the asphalt at this location for enhanced warning for carts to stop."

PWAC members directed staff to pursue a plan and provide costs for

Recommendations 1-4, leaving the recommendation regarding speed bumps to the residential districts.

Mr. Bush indicated he had also been directed to look at a tunnel issue south of CR466A that goes under Morse Boulevard. The specific resident request was for a 3-way stop. They have looked at the issue previously, and as before, it is their opinion that current traffic does not warrant a 3-way stop. The issue is that when a cart is going southbound, it is going downhill and around a curve. Sometimes, left-turning carts don't yield to oncoming traffic. They noted that visibility is good at the stop sign and carts actually stop. Their recommendation is to place a visible "Yield to oncoming traffic" sign for left-turning traffic. PWAC members directed staff to proceed with a temporary sign until a permanent sign can be created and placed.

- Morse Boulevard Bridge Embankment. They are in the final stages of permitting, waiting only for the Army Corps of Engineers to issue the final permit, hopefully by the end of summer. They will not complete the plan and costs until that time. Then it will be a question of timing as they will want to do the work at a low traffic period.

The August PWAC meeting will be held on August 7, at 9AM, at the District office in Lake Sumter Landing. A PWAC Budget Workshop will be held August 28, at 9AM, at the District office. Agendas and minutes can be found on the District's website, [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org), click on "Committees" at the top menu bar, then select "Project Wide Advisory Committee" on the drop-down menu. You can download the full agenda packet by selecting the icon at the far right of the meeting schedule. □

## Multi-Modal Path Discussion Group (MMPDG) Meeting Highlights July 29, 2017

**Speed Bumps.** Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 do not have existing speed bumps. Districts 5 and 6 do have existing speed bumps and will address existing or future requests when they are received. The installation of speed bumps falls under the purview of each numbered District.

Public suggestions were made to consider installing speed bumps on roadways at gate entrances and move them from paths. With the exception of Marion County, any request to install speed bumps on the roadway would fall within the purview of the County or municipality.

**Directional Signage.** District 3 is not in favor of any additional signage. There was discussion about uniformity and standardization of limited signage, signage at tunnel exits, visibility and ease of reading during the day and reflectivity at night.

Staff will have Traffic Engineer review existing visibility issues of granite signage south of CR466A, review Stop/safety signage along paths and at tunnel exits and the possibility of including directions on signage at tunnel exits. They will request a recommendation from Engineer to standardize color schemes and layout of directional signage and posts, with a pictorial representation to be utilized in a pilot program that will be used to receive resident input.

After public comments and committee discussion, it was decided that a wayfinding signage study will not be conducted at this time.

Staff will schedule an additional meeting of the MMPDG to review Engineer's recommendation following budget adoptions in September. □

### IS YOUR LOVED ONE IN THE HOSPITAL?

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The caregiver advocate provides support, direction, education and guidance during critical care experiences and crisis management. If you have a loved one in the hospital and are unsure of what your options and resources are, a health care advocate can help make sure that all of your resources are being presented and your rights are being respected. When a loved one is in the hospital, decision-making can be difficult especially in such an overwhelming health-care arena. The Tri-County Caregiver Resource Center can supply you with an advocate and help families put a caregiving action plan in place for future planning in hopes of preventing crisis management from a hospital bed. Transitioning your loved one from hospital, to rehab and back to home successfully is difficult to do because there is so much information and knowledge necessary to make the best decisions. The Resource Center will help direct the options that best suit your clinical financial and social criteria so that the family does not have to run in many different

directions chasing options that end up not being appropriate. If you would like more information please contact the Tri-County Caregiver Resource Center at 352-775-2952. We are a non-profit organization with the goal of providing a trusted source of education and guidance for our community.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Placement Services     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PT at Home          | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician Referrals    |

[www.tricountycaregiverresourcecenter.org](http://www.tricountycaregiverresourcecenter.org)

352-775-2952



Tri-County

Caregiver Resource Center



## CDD7 Board of Supervisors Vacancy

The Village Community Development District No. 7 Board of Supervisors is seeking applicants who are interested in filling Seat 3, which was recently vacated due to the resignation of an existing Board Supervisor. The remainder of the existing four (4) year term for the vacated Seat will expire in November 2018.

Any interested applicants must be a qualified elector which is defined by Florida Statute 190 as "any person at least 18 years of age who is a citizen of the United States, a legal resident of Florida and of the district, and who registers to vote with the Supervisor of Elections in the county in which the district land is located".

To obtain additional information or request an application you may contact Jennifer McQueary, District Clerk at (352) 751-3939 or obtain a copy of the application on the District's website [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org).

Applications must be submitted to the District Clerk no later than 5PM on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, at the District Office, 984 Old Mill Run, The Villages.

The Board of Supervisors will interview applicants during a Board Meeting to be held on Thursday, August 24, 2017, at 8AM, in the District Office Board Room, 984 Old Mill Run, The Villages, FL.



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## Another Golf Cart Trauma Alert

A recent visitor to family in The Villages learned that a fun night can quickly turn tragic.

After a night of drinking at one of the town squares, a young man driving a golf cart with a female passenger made a sudden, sharp turn causing the female to fall onto the pavement, unconscious and bleeding. Panicking, the man made matters worse by allegedly dragging her into the bushes and leaving her, instead of calling for help. Fortunately, several witnesses tended to the woman, who was transported as a trauma alert to Ocala Regional Medical Center where she underwent brain surgery for brain edema intracranial pressure.

Lessons learned? We should all know that drinking and driving don't mix, whether in a car or a golf cart. The POA has repeatedly implored residents to have seat belts in their golf carts and to use them!

Finally, golf carts are not toys and they are not off road 4-wheelers. They are vehicles that can

cause serious damage when not used properly and safely. Our best wishes for a full recovery for the woman who was injured. □

## Learn and Grow Expo

**Lake Sumter Landing**  
**August 3, 2017**  
**8AM-11AM**

The Enrichment Academy (TEA) is kicking off its new curriculum and offering early registration at a Learn and Grow Expo at Lake Sumter Landing on August 3. Residents will have the opportunity to meet instructors, ask questions, pick up a course catalog and register for classes that will begin in October. Early registration is only available to residents with a valid resident ID.

Registration start dates for residents is August 7 and for non-residents August 21. In the event of inclement weather, the Expo will be held at the Lake Miona Recreation Center. For more information call 352-674-1800 or visit [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org).

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## Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) Members Get In Depth Look At Amenity Responsibilities

Project Wide Advisory Committee members, perhaps for the first time, realized the full scope of their new responsibilities in managing the residential amenities south of CR466 when they attended a 6-hour workshop on July 17.

Residents south of CR466, too, should read the following to understand the new role of PWAC in management of their amenity fees.

District Manager, Janet Tutt, said because of the size and volume of these new responsibilities, she supports communication by committee members with District staff. She also advised that they should not get involved in day-to-day operations. Their role is policy and budgets.

Ms. Tutt explained to the Committee that, because of the extensive expansion of the District, they are adjusting staff responsibilities and have changed some hiring decisions. Instead of hiring a Finance Manager to replace retiring Interim Finance Director, Sarah Koser, and an Assistant District Manager with a strong fin-

ance background, Ms. Tutt will be hiring a Finance Director and an Assistant District Manager with more focused strengths in local government and the ability to meet the future needs expected due to the growth and development of infrastructure within the Districts.

Department after department detailed his/her area of responsibility and how PWAC might be involved because amenity fees are used to pay for its program or service.

**Purchasing.** PWAC will recommend approval of contracts for services or equipment paid for by amenity fees as it does maintenance contracts. They were advised that the current number of contracts under purchasing's purview has increased by approximately 700.

**Recreation and Parks.** PWAC will be responsible for review and approval of contracts, policy changes (on which PWAC and the Amenity Authority Committee must agree in order to maintain a uniformity of services), and responding to individual resident questions and comments. Ms. Tutt said that residents haven't come to SLRDD much in the previous 12 years, but they might be inclined to come to PWAC, as they do to AAC for amenity issues north of CR466. She also noted that resident input to AAC has reduced over time, as has the length of meetings. *(Editor's Note: Observation is that AAC is the most attended of all public District meetings in The Villages.)*

Expenses are tracked separately for Recreation and Parks facilities south of CR466 that are paid from Sumter Landing Amenity Division (SLAD).

**Community Watch.** according to Ms. Tutt, may be the most misunderstood department operated by the District. Expenses are paid from the General Fund and are currently allocated on a rooftop basis. In fiscal year 2016-17, the rooftop percentages were allocated at 38% for the Village Center District (21,955 homes) and 62% for the Sumter Landing District (35,620 homes). Community Watch has approximately 300 total employees, with only 19 that are full time.

**Property Management.** This department, managed by Sam Wartinbee, is responsible for all landscape contracts and maintaining all amenity properties. Mr. Wartinbee explained that high standards are maintained by setting staff expectations, regular inspections, and scheduled maintenance. The department was restructured after the amenity purchase, with 5/8 of the department's 18 property management and landscape supervisors now allocated to properties south of CR466. Note that CDD supervisors are responsible for assigned areas of responsibility, not employees.

PWAC members might hear about issues such as maintenance of sports courts, which are maintained as recreational, not competitive, courts. Mr. Wartinbee also advised that until the water conservation order is lifted, they will not replace landscaping. The exception is that contractors who maintain the public areas, i.e., roundabout plantings, have already contracted for the plants they use, so they must take possession of them based on the established schedule.

Property Management has a water usage variance which allows them to adjust usage as long as they don't exceed annual allocations. This allows them to use more water during dry months and less during rainy months. They also pay the 10% water surcharge during Phase III conservation order.

Ms. Tutt advised that PWAC members may hear more about Neighborhood Recreation Centers than they might think, because some residents use them as informal dog parks, or for gathering with dogs off leash, leading to a degrading of landscape and grass. Members are likely to hear complaints on both sides of this argument.

(Continued on page 19)

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## PWAC Workshop

(Continued from page 18)

**Executive Golf.** There are 20 Sumter Landing Amenity District (SLAD) executive golf courses, which has necessitated one new supervisor and one new part-time administrative position.

Amenity standards are the same for all of the courses. Golf course starter shack employees

work for Golf Management Solutions (GMS), which also maintains the online tee time system. It is a turnkey operation paid via contract.

Ms. Tutt advised there have been periodic discussions about eliminating or changing the trail fees. This will not probably happen since trail fees were included in the purchase revenue projections and there are more golf courses being built. Trail fees are a line item

in the SLAD budget, but are not allocated to offset any specific costs. The price of trail fees is determined by the AAC and PWAC/SLCDD, and must be the same.

Executive golf courses are watered 100% from stormwater, are metered and paid for.

**Customer Service.** Functions of this department are paid with amenity fees.

**Finance.** Amenity fees, and the maximum "deferral rate" are set individually by PWAC and AAC. Amenity fees are billed to residents on the Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD) monthly "one bill." The amount of the amenity fee is determined when the resident purchases or builds a home, and ranges from less than \$100 (in older areas) to the \$155 current maximum deferral.

Amenity fees currently account for 62.78% of the FY2016-17 annual income.

**Budget.** The majority of reserves for PWAC/Maintenance remain with the individual numbered districts, while PWAC/Amenities reserves stay with SLAD. The current reserves are very healthy because of the way the purchase was set up with an initial Developer-paid deposit, and with budgeted annual deposits to the reserve account. (NOTE: Prior purchases did not include these reserves, which ultimately lead to the lawsuit and \$40 Million settlement.)

Department staff and Budget Director Barbara Kays are intensely looking at allocation methods and thinking "outside of the box" to ensure that all parties are paying their fair share after the purchase.

Rooftop percentages for FY 2017-18 are expected to be 63% SLAD and 37% RAD (Recreation Amenities Division, controlled by the AAC). □

## Inspector General Warns of New Social Security Fraud Scheme

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is reporting that random citizens are getting calls (some from the 323 area code) from persons posing as SSA employees.

The fraudsters are attempting to get potential victims to verify their name, date of birth, Social Security number, parents' names, and other personal information, in some cases by telling them they are due for a 1.7% cost-of-living increase. □



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## Our Gardening Column:

## Summertime Sweeties

by Anne Lambrecht,  
Fanatical Gardener  
Mrsanne04@gmail.com

Here are a few tried and true hot weather, colorful, low maintenance, flowering plants for the summer days ahead.

**Angelonia**, (or summer snapdragon) is a spectacular addition for continuous color in any garden and it's only been around since the late 1990's! The blooms are reminiscent of the wide-open mouth of a monstrous dragon. The vibrant flowers can be found in blue, purple, pinks and whites with green glossy foliage. Angelonia produce flowers all summer long, and the flower doesn't require any deadheading to keep blooms going. Most plants grow upright between 1 to 2 feet, which makes these plants a great addition to mixed containers.

**Celosia** is a small genus of ornamental plants in the amaranth family whose flowers look like little flames of fire. In fact their name means "burned" in Greek. They come in red, yellow, orange and pink. Once established they need little water and can live in the hot blazing sun well into fall. Celosia need full

sun, at least six hours a day, and soil that is rich and moist, but not wet. They are also called Cockscomb and wool flowers and their stylized flames are crested and plumed. You can find celosia at most box stores.

**Torenia**, in the Snapdragon family, is called Wish Bone flower because inside each little bright and quirky flower is a tiny wishbone. Sometimes the larger pollinators will break the wishbone. The tubular flowers look like a snapdragon and come in pink, purple and blue with a yellow dot in the center lobe. This low growing plant is great for borders in the sun or shade. Another name for Torenia is called Clown Flower because of the way its little face looks like a clown.

**Pentas** are colorful little five-starred flowers that together in their group look like umbrellas. Pentas love the heat and pollinators love Pentas. These 12" plants produce red, pink, purple or white flowers throughout the summer and are a great source of food for hummingbirds and butterflies. The red ones are usually taller and more attractive to wildlife.

In many areas of Florida, Pentas will grow as perennials, though they will die back after freezes if not protected. Pentas are great plants for container gardens and also work well in mass plantings in garden beds.

**Portulaca**, Moss Rose or Purslane, is a low growing, sun loving, succulent with brightly colored flowers that close up at night and on

cloudy days. Flower colors come in shades of rose, salmon, pink, scarlet, orange, yellow and white. Some flowers are also striped or spotted with contrasting colors. Plants are drought tolerant and grow well in poor, sandy soil provided it is well drained. There is a wild weed species of Purslane which is edible and extremely nutritious.

**Ornamental Sweet Potato** is a sun loving ground cover or container plant in the morning glory family, whose leaves are the star of the show. The leaves come in dark purple, chartreuse green or variegated green and white. They tend to spread and if you use in a container, you might have to water more often than you would want. I know a lady who used them instead of a lawn - right here in the Villages! The cold weather will cause them to go dormant and they will restart from underground tubers which are inedible. They are available at most garden centers.

**Coleus** - is a great plant for its colorful foliage and should be used to brighten up a shady area. Many new varieties are now grown for sunny areas. They are low growing with interesting colored foliage in combinations of green, yellow, pink, red, maroon, etc.

Coleus also have a wide variety of leaf sizes and overall shapes. Coleus can be added to beds and borders for interest or grown in containers. They need fertile, well-draining soil and usually perform best in areas with partial shade, though many varieties can also tolerate sun. These plants can be given a boost of half-strength liquid fertilizer during their active growth in spring and summer. Their spiked flowers (always the same color, purple) usually appear in summer; however, these can be removed if desired. You can also pinch the shoots of young coleus plants to produce bushier growth. They are easily rooted in water. □



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If you have an old, worn-out U.S. flag, you can take it to "Flags & Flag Poles" for proper retirement. Flags can be dropped off any time 8AM - 4PM Monday - Friday at 211 US-27, Lady Lake, next door to Tire Round-Up. They can be reached at 352-751-1876. □



# Seniors vs. Crime

## Leading the Fight Against Scams Veterans Health Care Scam

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently issued a "Scam Alert" to veterans and their families warning of a new scam that specifically targets them and their health care. The Villages has a large segment of veterans among our residents so this warning is directed at them.

Carol Kando-Pineda, an Attorney with the FTC's Consumer & Business Education Division, reports that there's a new scam out there, preying on veterans who are making decisions about their medical care.

Any veteran using VA medical facilities knows that sometimes there is a real problem in getting a timely VA health care appointment. The system is in great demand so the VA has provided an alternative. The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The program allows certain eligible vets to use approved health care providers who are outside of the VA system. Veterans or families can call the VCP's toll-free number (1-866-606-8198) to verify their eligibility for the program.

Here's the problem: Scammers have set up

a phony telephone line that very closely resembles the VCP's real telephone number. Con artists often use names, seals, and logos that look or sound like those of respected, legitimate organizations. This time they're using a phone number that's almost identical to the real thing, counting on creating confusion. They want to trick you into calling them instead of the VA's VCP telephone line.

Veterans or their family members call and think they've reached the VCP. **The fake line's message says you're entitled to a rebate if you provide a credit card number. But if you give up your account information, the scammers will charge your account and you'll get nothing in return. There is no rebate and you'll need to cancel your credit card since it has been compromised.**

If you're a veteran – or you're helping one with health care – remember these tips to avoid a scammer's tricks.

First, be sure you're calling the real number for the Veterans Choice Program: **866-606-8198**. If you're not sure you've reached the VCP, hang up. Check the VCP's site for the real number and try again.

Second, the VA – or any government agency – will not ask for your financial account information.

Visit VCP's web site to learn more about the Veterans Choice Program – or call 866-606-8198. Check out the VA's identity theft prevention program, More Than a Number.

Report identity theft to the FTC and get a personalized recovery plan at **IdentityTheft.gov**.

Remember, no one will watch out for your interests better than you. If you need assistance with understanding any aspect of this veterans health care scam, contact the nearest Seniors vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors vs. Crime can be reached at:

- The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages – (352) 674-1882
- The Marion County Sheriff's Office in The Villages – (352) 753-7775
- The Sumter County Sheriff's Office in The Villages – (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606
- The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 750-1914 □

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**Cozco Handcrafts** - 1121 Main St., Spanish Springs, 352-430-0386. 10% off non-sale items.

**Decorating Den in The Villages** - Creating beautiful rooms since 1969. 10% POA discount - Must mention this ad. 352-787-4413.

**Edible Arrangements** - Southern Trace Shopping Center, 352-391-1334. \$3 off order greater than \$25.

**Entry Point by Perry Decorative Glass** - La Plaza Grande, 352-751-0883. 10% off any non-sale items (cannot be combined with any other offer). Present POA membership card.

**Exercise2gether** - 10% Off Services for POA Members, please present POA membership card. 352-801-1633.

**EyeSite of The Villages** - Dr. Paul E Collins - Grand Traverse "Publix" Plaza, adjacent to Brownwood. 20% Off a Complete Pair of Prescription Eyewear, Frames & Lenses (excluding Oakley & Tifosi). 352-674-3937, eyesite-thevillages.com

**Flags & Flag Poles** - 211 S. Hwy 27/441 next to Tire Round-up, Lady Lake. 352-751-1876. \$5 off installation of new flag pole for POA members. Discount on cash or check orders only.

**Friar Income Tax Preparation Service** - Barney Madden, Notary Public - 10% POA Discount. 1544 Hillcrest Drive. Villages resident. 352-751-4435.

**Golf Clubs & Bag Lock** - Gator Jaws, \$30 each or 10% POA discount off on 2 or more, 352-750-0488.

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## What To Look For In A Doctor (Part Two of a Three-Part Series)



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Beyond the credentials, the second essential that physician/health care providers should possess is the ability to realize that "you don't know...what you don't know." Goodness...why is that so hard ?

Too often doctors feel compelled to have the answers. Thus, false conclusions may be reached when assuming a cause/effect based upon past knowledge. A totally different conclusion could occur with a slight change in the way things are approached. The farther one deviates in a rigid mind-thought, the more difficult it becomes to find what is hidden. How many times has it been said of someone, "you just can't tell him anything!" In medicine, this can result as a misdiagnosis.

Sometimes what is expected by both patient and physician drive unrealistic expectations. But realizing that "you don't know...what you don't know" can actually open one's mind to entertain new approaches.

As a lighter practical example, for decades patients were sutured back together. Who would have thought, by approaching the challenge with a slightly different perspective, that bio-gluing would yield a much faster result, reduce procedural time, and in many cases achieve a superior functional and cosmetic result.

This is a quote whose source I have forgotten, and so I apologize to the author. "Nothing is so fatal to the progress of the human mind as to suppose our views of science are ultimate; that there are no new mysteries in nature; that our triumphs are complete; and that there are no new worlds to conquer."

To be continued...